

**PREPARING AND SUPPORTING DIVERSE,  
CULTURALLY COMPETENT LEADERS:  
Practice and Policy Considerations**



Institute for Educational Leadership

## ABOUT THIS BRIEF

In the fall of 2004, the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) convened members of the School Leadership Learning Community (SLLC) and invited guests for three invitational, issue-focused meetings. The meetings were supported by the Laboratory for Student Success (LSS), the mid-Atlantic regional educational laboratory at Temple University, through a contract with the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES). Each of the meetings was conducted as a modified Select Seminar ([www.casdaney.neric.org/history3.htm](http://www.casdaney.neric.org/history3.htm)) and explored an issue specific to preparing and supporting school leaders.

The SLLC, a professional development and support network among the grantees in the U.S. Department of Education's School Leadership Program, is managed and supported by IEL. Barbara McCloud, Senior Leadership Associate with IEL, provided the primary project direction and coordination for the network. The network brings together, keeps together, and informs members across the country working to promote effective school leadership and increased student achievement for all students. All SLLC member programs are school leadership programs that are active partnerships among school districts, colleges and universities, and/or professional associations.

The IEL version of a Select Seminar rested on two principles: the participants were the experts and each voice was of equal importance. The discussions were held in an environment conducive to open and honest dialogue and participants were encouraged to “dig deeper” into the issues being discussed. The conversations captured busy professionals' knowledge and insights about preparing school leaders and identified promising practices being implemented across the country. A list of the diverse participants, which included SLLC members as well as invited guests with expertise in the issue area being discussed, is located at the end of the publication.

This report, *Preparing and Supporting Diverse, Culturally Competent Leaders: Implications for Policy and Practice*, provides field-based insights—not silver bullets, not research findings, and not final solutions—collected from people working in, and familiar

with, leadership-development programs for school leaders in urban, suburban, and rural districts across the country. It shares and distills authentic conversations, anchored by participants' direct experiences. These conversations acknowledged challenges, but focused more intently on promising practices and policy and program strategies that make a difference in programs and initiatives for preparing school leaders, who are themselves diverse and have the skills, knowledge, and attributes necessary for cultural competence. Selected examples from participants are indicated by the diamond symbol. ■

## PREPARING AND SUPPORTING DIVERSE AND CULTURALLY COMPETENT SCHOOL LEADERS: Practice and Policy Considerations

As school leaders work to ensure that no child is left behind, it is important that they understand and value the demographic realities of our nation and of the children they serve. Today, we live in an increasingly diverse nation. The make-up of America's population continues to change at a rapid pace and for a variety of reasons. The America we see in 2005 is far removed from the “Ozzie and Harriet” America of the 1950s. Demographer Harold “Bud” Hodgkinson amplifies the point, that the nation's diversity will continue to increase, as he discusses our nation's youngest children—the individuals who comprise America's future. (Harold Hodgkinson, *Leaving Too Many Children Behind*. Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership, 2002). He notes that “...our preschool population total is 15.4 million and that one-third of these youngsters live in only four states; California (2.5 million), Florida (0.9 million), New York (1.2 million), and Texas (1.6 million).”

Hodgkinson adds that these same four states also represent the future in terms of ethnic diversity, stating that the total population of California is 32.4 percent Hispanic (not a race, an ethnic group), 10.9 percent Asian, 6.7 percent Black, 1 percent American Indian, 16.8 percent “other,” and 4.7 percent mixed—for a total non-white population of 72.5 percent. He states that our youngest children are the most diverse group in the United States, and that they will make the na-

tion more diverse as they age. In addition, almost 9 million young people ages five to seventeen speak a language other than English in their home, and 2.6 million of them have difficulty speaking English. ...we could estimate that almost one-half million are being raised in families that speak no English at home, and that at least 125,000 will need special attention in preschool and kindergarten to learn to speak and learn English.” In addition, The National Center for Cultural Competence (Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development) notes that immigration patterns, as well as increases among linguistically diverse groups who already reside in the country, also contribute to America’s ever-growing diversity.

In a recent Corwin Press publication, “Becoming A Culturally Proficient Leader,” authors Laraine Roberts and Randall Lindsey ask, “What if we were to envision education as a means of enlarging one’s own culture through meaningful interactions with people from other cultures? What then would we see in our schools and classrooms? Quite possibly we would see school leaders searching for ways to work more successfully with students who represent the many different cultural, ethnic, linguistic, religious, and economic subcultures within our diverse society.”

Participants in the seminar “Preparing and Supporting Diverse and Culturally Competent School Leaders: Practice and Policy Implications,” engaged in candid conversations about what America’s ever-changing demographics mean for current and future school leaders. They considered the knowledge, skills, and attributes that culturally competent leaders need; discussed where and how these are best developed; and made recommendations for practice and policy. In short, they talked about numerous competencies and strategies required of school leaders whose visions of education encompass America’s diverse population, and they talked about how to prepare and support such leaders.

The two-day session reflected the kind of courageous conversations that are required if our nation is to prepare school leaders who are equipped to serve *all* of the children enrolled in our schools. An initial list of what seminar participants noted as the knowledge, skills, and attributes of a culturally competent school leader was developed during brainstorming sessions. The list is but a beginning, but it reflects the ideas

that surfaced during participants’ discussions. This list is shown in the box on page three. In addition, five themes emerged from the conversations and are offered below as important factors for consideration by policymakers and practitioners.

## THEME 1

**Educational leaders who are not culturally competent cannot be fully effective.**

**C**hallenged to consider what culturally competent leaders need to know and be able to do, participants first decided to ask a preceding question: “Is a culturally competent school leader any different from an effective school leader?” Said another way, is it possible to have an effective school leader who is not culturally competent? Participants agreed that, increasingly, it is not.

Some school leaders in high-performing schools and districts may appear to be more effective than they actually are. As schools are required by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) to disaggregate test results across specific subgroups, even successful schools are being forced to acknowledge pronounced differences in performance between majority students and those from minority and certain ethnic groups. Participants noted that these gaps are found not only in groups facing overt barriers to learning, such as poverty or language differences, but also in middle class, English-speaking, minority groups. This suggests that various covert issues related to race, culture, and social difference affect student learning. School leaders need to understand and address all of these issues.

Although the argument in support of culturally competent leaders is most evident in diverse urban areas, rapid patterns of demographic change mean that few school districts will remain culturally homogenous in the near future. (It is important to note, however, that cultural competence is important in all contexts—rural, urban, suburban—and in all settings, regardless of whether the populations are homogenous or diverse.) A leader’s grasp of cultural issues and a leader’s commitment to socially just and equitable schools will help determine whether he or she sets a tone for all stakeholders and welcomes growing

## “Knowledge, Skills and Attributes of Culturally Competent School Leaders”

### General Statements

#### Leaders Need

- ◆ Understanding of critical theories about how people learn, and the impact of race, power, legitimacy, cultural capital, poverty, disability, ethnicity, gender, age, language, and other factors on learning
- ◆ Understanding of patterns of discrimination and inequalities, injustice, and the benefits and liabilities associated with individual groups
- ◆ Ability to articulate his/her own philosophy of education and use it to maintain the status quo or to empower others’ active participation in their own transformation

#### Knowledge

- ◆ Knows and questions his/her values, commitments, beliefs, prejudices, and uses of power and influence
- ◆ Understands varied contexts and situations and accepts challenges presented
- ◆ Understands cultural history of school, community, and parents
- ◆ Possesses a global perspective
- ◆ Knows culturally relevant curricula and instructional strategies in support of student achievement
- ◆ Knows about various learning styles and different ways to assess student understanding
- ◆ Knows processes for informing and mobilizing organizational change/cultural competence
- ◆ Knows about and how to use data
- ◆ Understands and manages collaboration with community, capitalizing on the community’s assets

#### Skills

- ◆ Possesses capacity to break down systems of practice that perpetuate inequalities
- ◆ Engages people from different cultures; acts as “cultural broker”
- ◆ Conducts “situational audits”
- ◆ Creates a “safe” environment of cultural competence where people are held accountable; facilitates dialogue and mediates conflict
- ◆ Effectively communicates a culturally competent vision and its goals
- ◆ Has capacity to catalyze change and deal with dissonance
- ◆ Manages pressure, tension, stress, and turbulence

#### Attributes

- ◆ Empathy/Caring
- ◆ Commitment—heart, spirit, and energy
- ◆ High expectations for all
- ◆ Role model
- ◆ Open to change and to differences
- ◆ Values cultural diversity
- ◆ Comfortable sharing power

diversity—and a broader perspective as an opportunity to help students develop new skills and improve academic outcomes—or whether he or she will react defensively to maintain the status quo.

Participants agreed that cultural competence should be viewed as a set of capacities that inform every aspect of effective leadership, rather than as an added component or “icing on the cake.” Only by fully integrating cultural competence in preparation and professional development at all levels will schools be able to 1) enact needed instructional practices and policies and 2) develop the trusting relationships required to ensure that all children are given a quality education.

## THEME 2

**Culturally competent leaders work to understand their own biases as well as patterns of discrimination. They have the skills to mitigate the attendant negative effects on student achievement and the personal courage and commitment to persist.**

Participants emphasized that self-awareness provides the foundation for cultural competence. According to the Minority School Achievement Network, if school leaders are serious about closing the minority achievement gap, they must be willing to sit down and talk honestly about issues of race and class. School leaders need to convene staff to engage in “courageous conversations”—but only after they have participated in their own candid, reflective discussions to address issues such as race, class, discrimination, and diversity, including a self-assessment of their own values, behaviors, and attitudes pertinent to these issues.

Preparation programs need to provide safe environments for school leaders to “take the blinders off.” Supportive settings should encourage leaders to tell their own stories and share the values, beliefs, and assumptions and expectations they hold with others who have different stories to tell. They should also prod leaders to explore more difficult, often unsettling questions, such as: What privileges do they enjoy? How do they use their power and influence? What kind of

prejudice and bias influence their leadership decisions and behaviors? and Does it have an impact on the lives of their students?

Leaders also need to consider systemic patterns of discrimination and prejudice. How are cultural differences and prejudices about them played out in a variety of economic and social institutions, especially schools? The National Center for Cultural Competence at Georgetown University offers a framework for achieving cultural competence, based on the work of Cross and his colleagues. (Cross, T., Bazron, B., Dennis, K., and Isaacs, M. *Towards a culturally competent system of care, Volume I*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Child Development Center, CASSP Technical Assistance Center, 1989.) The Center notes that cultural competence is a developmental process. As such, “cultural competence requires that organizations 1) have a defined set of values and principles and demonstrate behaviors, attitudes, policies, and structures that enable them to work effectively cross-culturally; 2) have the capacity to value diversity, conduct self-assessment, manage the dynamics of difference, acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge, and adapt to diversity and the cultural contexts of the communities they serve; and 3) incorporate the aforementioned in all aspects of policymaking, administration, practice, and service delivery and involve consumers, key stakeholders, and communities.” (<http://gucchd.georgetown.edu/nccc/framework.html>)

Culturally competent leaders need to understand their cultural history and contemporary status, as well as that of their students and their communities. In particular, if they are to fully appreciate their students’ strengths and needs, culturally competent leaders must first identify where and how structural inequities have and continue to affect students’ lives.

A variety of skills can help leaders mitigate the negative effects of prejudice and cultural barriers. First is the ability to develop and model a positive vision of a culturally diverse school and use it to strengthen their schools and communities. Second is to simultaneously keep the focus on 1) effective strategies for improving student achievement and well-being and 2) where strategies need to be further developed. In so doing, they also are explicit about common American values that inform public education—chief among them being social justice, fairness, and equity.



As instructional leaders, they must be familiar with instructional methods that speak to different learning styles and find ways to create and share new resources with their staff. They should encourage staff efforts to experiment with new approaches and provide staff development opportunities to help teachers enhance their ability to engage and motivate diverse students.

Strategic leaders use data to build support and mobilize action, but skillful, culturally competent leaders look well beyond test results to make the case for change. They disaggregate a variety of carefully selected school data on student participation as it relates to health, behavior, attendance, and academic as well as employment opportunities. They also look to census reports and other state and local sources for additional information and resources on how diverse student groups are faring.

Some potential school leaders have a natural ability to see inequities and the courage to take action against them. Preparation programs can help aspiring school leaders develop these attributes by paying more attention to Standard No. 5 of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders (<http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/isllcstd.pdf>). ISSLC Standard No. 5 focuses on "...an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner." Instead of shying away from discussions about values, professional development programs can be organized around them. Clarifying the connection between cultural competence and justice and the principles of democratic education will help aspiring and current leaders acquire insights, a broadened sense of purpose, and the tenacity to be leaders for learning for all students. Such an explicit focus can also encourage people who are clearly uncomfortable or ineffective in diverse settings to opt out—thus paving the way for better selection, placement, and retention of more effective leaders.

### THEME 3

**Much of what culturally competent leaders must know and be able to do is learned in relationships with families and communities.**

As community leaders, it is important for school leaders to know how to engage families and community partners in collaborative efforts. Culturally competent leaders do not use cultural differences as an excuse for poor student achievement; instead, they create an environment in which all stakeholders can honestly address cultural issues—and end the “blame game.” Leaders provide the resources—including time and skilled facilitation—necessary to engage school communities in candid and often difficult, ongoing conversations about how to change schools from what they are, to what they could be. Because they recognize that tension and dissent can energize change, culturally competent leaders are willing to tolerate significant turbulence. By clearly communicating a vision of a culturally competent school, they find ways to channel conflict constructively rather than suppressing it.

In the course of their conversations, participants frequently returned to the importance of intentional community engagement, pointing to extensive research conducted by Anthony Bryk and his colleagues for the Chicago Reform Project. (Bryk, A., Sebring, P. B., Kerbow, D., Rollow, S., and Easton, J. Q. *Charting Chicago School Reform*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998.) That work confirmed that effective schools made intensive efforts to reach out into the community—they took action to show parents that school staff cared about their children and sought to build trusting relationships between school and community.

If leaders are to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attributes that constitute cultural competence, they need to experience more than “drive-by consultations” or “food-group” training that substitutes generalizations of major differences among cultural and ethnic groups for real understanding. Intentional conversations with families and community members can help reverse the usual “leaders talk and others pay attention” relationship. Leaders become learners, asking questions and listening to answers. The process challenges leaders to share their own values and to be receptive to new points of view.

As family members from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds share their own school experiences and assumptions about schools and learning, leaders may better understand the factors that affect how families participate in their children's education. For example, while school leaders may understand the theory of second-language acquisition, they may never have heard first-hand how life is filtered and sometimes distorted through language barriers—nor have appreciated the extent to which differences in language ability create unequal power relationships between families and school staff.

Informal conversations are also useful. In fact, the frequency with which leaders casually interact with families and students can be an important measure of cultural competence—as long as the manner in which they are conducted conveys the leader's respect and regard. Home visits and neighborhood walks are other ways that leaders can begin to get a feel for the community in which they are working and demonstrate their willingness to break down barriers between school and community.

Conversations like these will only make a difference, however, if leaders use them to improve school practice and policies. Moving from awareness to action might mean, for example, introducing more frequent and effective use of translators, or helping the school come to understand fully the message that culturally pejorative names for athletic teams sends to students and the community.

Community assessment and mapping activities are another strategy for helping develop cultural competence. School leaders need more than school data to get a 360-degree view of their students' challenges and strengths. Working relationships with community agencies help school leaders access information about a range of economic, social, and health factors that affect student learning. Dialogue with families, combined with community information, can help schools develop roadmaps to help parents guide their children's educational experiences and obtain the non-academic services and supports they need along the way. These kinds of strategies are endorsed by The Coalition for Community Schools ([www.communityschools.org](http://www.communityschools.org)) at the Institute for Educational Leadership. The Coalition's "Conditions for Learning" are:

- Challenging curriculum, qualified teachers, high standards and expectations
- Motivated and engaged students
- Attention to physical, social, and emotional needs of students and families
- Mutual respect and effective collaboration between families and school
- Involved community members.

Culturally competent leaders recognize the benefits of community collaboration and have the capacity to bring together the right players—a diverse, inclusive group of stakeholders that includes more than the "usual suspects." In some communities, collaborative efforts may already have begun to assemble information on needs, resources, and gaps in services. With school leaders at the table, partners can bring new resources, including health, social services, and after-school programs into the school. They may also introduce new methods to reach students with diverse learning styles and make curriculum and instruction more engaging to cultural and ethnic groups.

- ◆ Developing the flexibility and confidence necessary to invite in new partners is a skill best learned in school and community practice. For example, when a new principal at a school in New York City realized that drug dealers were recruiting her sixth-graders as "runners," she held an open meeting with families and community agencies to seek solutions. They decided to take a win-win approach—parents volunteered to constructively confront and "negotiate" with the drug dealers and the problem was resolved. In addition, the community agencies involved were able to provide services to deal with family and social issues that surfaced as conversations and negotiations continued.  
(Magalia Maldonado, New York City Department of Education, [mmalona@nycboe.net](mailto:mmalona@nycboe.net))

Through more intentional contact with families and community institutions, aspiring and sitting leaders broaden their perspective and develop a kind of "with-it-ness" that makes them more effective in dealing with cross-cultural issues. Most importantly, these connections ensure that leaders and school staff no longer think of "these children" but see them always as "our children."

**THEME 4**

**Culturally competent leadership develops over time and needs to be supported from preparation through practice. Creating collaborative frameworks and structures can be useful.**

According to participants, collaborative efforts between preparation programs and school districts need to develop a variety of structural supports for aspiring, new, and sitting leaders. This “scaffolding” creates a seamless web between preparation and continuing professional development—between universities, which provide much of the training, and districts, which know the leadership needs that must be filled.

While no single training model can fit all the contexts for which leaders must be prepared, effective leadership frameworks share several key features. For example, a leadership support structure should include safe settings in which participants can question their own perspectives with faculty, including mentors and coaches who are themselves culturally and ethnically diverse as well as culturally competent. The structure also should extend longitudinally beyond initial preparation into practice for both new and seasoned leaders.

Recently prepared leaders need help to sustain the gains they have made once they return to “business as usual.” New principals often find themselves just trying to put out fires and may lose sight of the kind of culturally competent school they want to create. Seasoned leaders can lose their edge. Transformative leaders at all stages should be nurtured as well as challenged.

Leaders need exposure to cultures and settings different from those they are used to if they are to lead, rather than react, to political currents in their own schools. Extended internships can offer diverse learning laboratories as well as an opportunity to become fluent in new skills.

- ◆ One of the programs in the Chicago Leadership Academies for Supporting Success, The Leadership Academy in Urban Network for Chicago (LAUNCH), provides year-long internships

during which aspiring principals take on new responsibilities at their home school and then are intentionally rotated to different settings to round out their experiences.

(Frederick Brown, Chicago Leadership Academies for Supporting Success, [fbrown@class.cps.k12.il.us](mailto:fbrown@class.cps.k12.il.us))

School districts and their top leaders—superintendents and school board members—need to understand and support what happens in preparation programs. Inviting sitting principals to help design and implement preparation courses may be one way to both tap their talents and to promote their professional development. Similarly, including other community agencies can provide a range of expertise beyond the education sector. In Georgia, for example, sitting principals and district staff are trained to understand what quality leadership is supposed to look like and how schools are supposed to operate. Cohort training in which learners stay together over an extended period and learn as peers can be especially effective.

Mentoring during the preparation period and extending into the first year or two of practice can help new leaders continue to grow and learn. Every new principal in New York City, for example, is now being assigned a mentor for two years. Whether they are called mentors or coaches, and whether they hail from education or from other sectors, the fundamental challenge is that they be people genuinely interested in nurturing new leaders and have the training to do so. The relationship between mentor and mentee is critical, so matches need to be made carefully. Random assignment often does not work. Mentors, like aspiring leaders, should be expected to meet specific standards. When they do not, they should be asked to exit the program.

A scaffolding approach to leadership training also recognizes the need to build a cadre of prospective and diverse leaders, beginning with teachers. When educators notice exceptional students, they often urge them to consider a range of possible career choices. Teaching, however, is seldom high on the list. In many states, such as Indiana where only five percent of current teachers are from minority backgrounds, efforts need to begin early to develop diverse and culturally competent educators.



At the same time, a leadership framework needs to lay out a continuum of skills and opportunities so that individuals can see where a teaching career might lead. Helping new teachers see the possibilities for advancement that exist within a district can be an important way for schools to recruit and retain high caliber staff. A collaboration between the New York City Department of Education, Region One LSC, with the Bank Street College of Education, for example, has developed a two-part preparation model as a first step in developing this kind of career path. Strong relationships and peer-to-peer learning among cohorts of aspiring teachers have also resulted.

Finally, a supportive leadership structure makes sure that leaders learn how to use a variety of tools, including data analysis techniques, situational audits, interviewing protocols, and community mapping formats. Lists of leadership skills and accompanying assessments can help schools identify teachers who show promise, provide opportunities for them to develop their abilities while contributing to the school, and screen out people who are not equipped for leadership roles.

- ◆ Rigorous selection is a hallmark of the Austin Independent School District School Leadership Academy, which was designed to prepare leaders for urban schools with significant populations of underachieving students. Candidates with at least three years teaching experience must be nominated by a superior, submit a portfolio of their accomplishments in the area of diversity, and answer several questions related to their work with specific populations. An orientation session introduces them to the program's demands and its focus on social justice. Final candidates are observed teaching and interacting with students. From over 100 applicants, about 15 are selected.

Depending on their interest, students are placed at an elementary-, middle-, or high-school leadership development school. Twelve credit hours of the program focus on real-world problem-solving. Interns research a significant school issue—analyzing data, interviewing families, and exploring best practices. Their objective is to recommend reasonable and balanced solutions. Interns also are assigned administrative duties, meet regularly with a principal/coach, and take a

variety of courses emphasizing the principal's role in promoting equity in school policy and practice. (Glenn Nolly and Vera Wehring, Austin Independent School District School Leadership Academy, [vwehring@austinisd.org](mailto:vwehring@austinisd.org))

- ◆ A two-part collaborative model (Bank Street College of Education and the NYC Department of Education Region 1, the Bronx) to train both teacher leaders and principals, in schools that serve a very diverse community, provides incentives to students by picking up two-thirds of the tuition. Selected by their school, teacher leaders stay in their classroom while taking 18 credits in adult and child development, structural leadership, and literacy and math instruction. Their classrooms provide lab sites for other teachers and they are freed up to work with colleagues one period a day. Upon completion of the 18 credits, they can choose to enter the Principals' Institute, a 36-credit program with a full-time summer internship program leading to a master's degree and placement as an assistant principal. We call this our blended leadership model. Those who do not enroll in the Principals' Institute are helped to gain national certification. (Carmen Jimenez, School Leadership Program Community School District Program, [cjimene@nyboe.net](mailto:cjimene@nyboe.net))

## THEME 5

**State and local policies need to build  
a sense of urgency about preparing  
culturally competent leaders.**

The majority of all college and university training programs are anchored in standards developed by ISLLC. None of these standards specifically addresses cultural competence. While ISLLC Standard No. 5 does reference “...an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner,” there is a definite need for a distinct and explicit standard requiring leaders who can demonstrate knowledge, skills, and attributes needed to work effectively in diverse settings. Such a standard would illuminate the importance of cultural competency and could be invaluable in creating a sense of urgency about incorporating training components, curricula, and strategies related to cultural diversity and cultural competence in all leadership preparation programs.

Citing the reality that “policies matter,” participants noted the importance of doing the advocacy work required to inform and influence policymakers, and then to hold them accountable for enacting specific policies and regulations in support of the preparation of culturally competent and diverse school leaders. Frequently during the discussions, participants acknowledged that issues of cultural competence and diversity—as well as related issues of race, gender, poverty, discrimination, special-needs populations, and linguistic diversity—continue to be uncomfortable for many and, indeed, unimportant for some. But, they insisted that champions must mobilize, advocates must unify, and stakeholders from all community sectors must galvanize efforts around these issues if, in fact, no child is to be left behind and if our nation’s future is to be viable. ■

## Recommendations

The following comments summarize several recommendations offered by participants during these discussions for helping better prepare and support leaders who are diverse and culturally competent:

- ◆ It was noted that state professional leadership boards and professional associations can help by including cultural competence in certification and recertification requirements. Certification boards might also stipulate that an array of courses focused on cultural competence must be taken for certification or recertification. In addition, they can encourage or allow culturally relevant experiences, including travel or second language study, as ways for meeting continuing education obligations.
- ◆ In general, standards and licensing requirements should be aligned to promote leadership frameworks that ensure coherence between standards and practice. Some states are also looking at a range of certifications that require skills and requirements needed in specific settings—differentiating the skills needed, for example, at different educational levels or in more challenging districts.
- ◆ State efforts to make available an on-line map of state-funded leadership activities would greatly improve knowledge sharing among partnership programs. Support for a clearinghouse to identify curricular materials and instructional methods that have proven effective with specific student groups is also needed. Some participants noted that much of what is currently available merely repackages conventional materials.
- ◆ State education departments can diversify the pool of potential leaders by promoting the recruitment of more minority teachers. For example, North and South Carolina currently sponsor teaching fellows programs. Students are identified in high school and their college tuition at a state school is paid for in return for a three-year teaching commitment. States can also give special attention to grant proposals that creatively address cultural issues in leadership preparation and support.
- ◆ Preparation programs and school districts need to establish more regular contact with key members of state legislative committees and boards. Policy-

makers need to be kept apprised of local concerns and provided with data and research summaries, examples of successful models, and other information they can use to advance a leadership agenda that includes issues regarding cultural competence.

Consideration should also be given to state-funded mentoring for both preparing and supporting new principals. This kind of scaled-up commitment requires advocates to have clear answers to questions about the mentor's role, the best way to select and match mentors and mentees, as well as methods to ensure high-quality training.

- ◆ Regionally, collaborations between preparation programs and school districts need to include more diverse partners—sociology, economics, and public policy departments; community institutions; local and state agencies; sitting school leaders; and school board members—all of whom can bring valuable perspectives to the design, practice, and financing of innovative leadership training that address cultural competence and diversity.
- ◆ At the district and building levels, job descriptions and performance evaluations should reflect the knowledge, skills, and attributes of cultural competence. Hiring procedures and interview protocols should assess the likelihood that candidates will work well in diverse settings. Using incentives or pay scales to bring talented people to hard-to-staff areas should also be explored. Multi-year contracts for principals, which exist in some states but not others, can make it easier for new principals to take the leadership risks necessary to turn around a challenging setting.
- ◆ Consider state models, such as in Oregon, that establish new standards with an emphasis on cultural competency for leaders. Oregon, supported by a grant from The Wallace Foundation, and after years of collaborative work including representatives from various sectors (e.g., the state board, universities, and school districts), recently unveiled the findings from their summit meeting focused on enhancing the cultural competency of the Oregon P-16 workforce. (To see a copy of their cultural competency summit report, visit their Web site at <http://www.ode.state.or.us/news/ccfullrprt.pdf>.)

◆ Finally, there is solid, albeit anecdotal, evidence that culturally competent leaders—surrounded by a culturally competent staff, using effective instructional materials—can improve results. More research, however, would underscore this point and yield improvements in preparation and support models. For example, efforts are needed to accomplish the following:

- spell out the impact of specific cultural factors on student achievement across student groups
- identify the elements of effective culturally-focused curriculum and instruction
- better understand the dynamics of mentoring relationships that support transformative leadership
- focus more attention and concentrated effort on the codification of specific best/promising strategies and practices related to the preparation and support of culturally competent, diverse school leaders.

The expanding and complex diversity of our nation's population, in rural, urban, and suburban school districts and communities, large or small, demands that school leaders themselves need to be a more diverse and culturally competent community. Furthermore, as we seek to improve student outcomes and ensure that not one child is left behind, we must recognize the important implications for school leaders as they deal with these demographic realities. Indeed, preparation programs to support and prepare school leaders must deliberately include the many key and critical issues related to cultural competence and diversity in the planning, design, implementation, and evaluation of the programs. We believe that preparing diverse and culturally competent school leaders is an imperative for today and for the future. We want to continue to address the issue—to monitor, extract, and disseminate lessons and best practices such as those reflected in this brief—in order to contribute to the knowledge and practice base as related to culturally competent and diverse school leaders. ■

# SCHOOL LEADERSHIP RESOURCES

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# SCHOOL LEADERSHIP RESOURCES

(continued)

## WEB SITES

e-Lead (<http://www.e-Lead.org>) is an important resource designed to increase the dissemination of effective principal preparation programs. It was developed by the Laboratory for Student Success at Temple University and the Institute for Educational Leadership, the Select Seminar sponsoring organization.

This Web-based resource is organized around six research-based principles for the professional development of school leaders. It includes a searchable database of existing, standards-based preparation programs. A leadership library offers annotated information about a number of leadership develop-

ment issues and links to the latest information and resources. e-Lead's blog, LeaderShipShape, is designed to provide school and district leaders with the most current and relevant information on news, research, controversies, events, and opportunities in the field. ■

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ISBN 1-933493-01-1 ■

